

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

A step towards greater consultation, cooperation and coordination on Muslim Affairs in the UK.

The Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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Weekly Updates on Reports, Committees and Events: Issue 21

Reports and Committee Updates

Coroner's Review Group

The MCB Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie, is a member of this Group. He is participating in its two-day meeting 10 – 11 May 2002. The Group is responsible for proposing changes to existing legislation on issues such as post mortems.

Hajj Delegation Advisory Group meeting

The British Hajj Advisory group met on Tuesday May 7th to discuss the reports from Lord Adam Patel, Head of the Delegation and the senior medical Advisor, Dr Abdul Raheem Khan. It was decided that at the next Advisory Group meeting, all the recommendations and conclusions will be debated and policies will be drawn up for the future.

Metropolitan Police Authority meeting

Members of the Muslim community met with the Police Authority as scheduled for every second Wednesday of the month on 8th May 2002. The subject for discussion was the recent rally in support of Israel which took place on Monday 6th May 2002. Apart from several other complaints about this particular event, MCB expressed its concerns at the way two Muslim journalists were manhandled and were prevented from interviewing those present in the rally. In addition to this, the way the Police arrives at an approximation of the number of people attending any particular rally was also questioned by the MCB.

Media Committee

Letter to the Times

The Media Committee wrote to the editor of the Times regarding the misleading and inaccurate comments made about the MCB by Jo Wagerman, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews (The Times, May 4th 2002).

The letter rebuffed Ms Wagerman's claim that the MCB supported attacks on Israeli civilians and that the Board's defence of Israel's actions had affected the otherwise cordial relations enjoyed by the British Muslim and Jewish communities. The letter stated that criticism of Israel was increasingly being represented as anti-Semitism and that such censorship proscribed critical and open analysis of events in the Middle East.

Letter to the Guardian

The Media Committee also wrote to columnist Seumas Milne of the Guardian for his incisive and balanced comment piece on the future of Muslim-Jewish relations in the Middle East and beyond (The Guardian, May 9th 2002).

The letter thanked Mr Milne for his sensitivity and acknowledgement of the disturbing rise in Islamophobia in Europe at a time when the media is more concerned to point out the growing incidence of anti-Semitism.

Letter to Chris Patten

The Media Committee wrote to Chris Patten to thank him for his thoughtful article which appeared in the Washington Post on May 7th 2002.

Advert in the Guardian

This is Palestine – the Holy Land in 2002

Muslim organisations in Britain, led by the MCB, placed an advertisement in The Guardian (7 May 2002), drawing attention to the Palestinian suffering and the demonstration planned for May 18.

Education Committee

Faith Schools

Nawazish Bokhari, Chair of the Education, Training and Employment Committee, attended a meeting with Liberal Democrat Education Spokesperson Phil Willis on Wednesday May 8th at the House of Lords.

The meeting was called to discuss the Liberal Democrats's amendment to the faith schools clause of the Education Bill. The clause deals with the need for faith schools to service both a faith community and the local area in which the school is situated.

International Affairs Committee

Tanzeem Wasti, Chair of the International Affairs Committee, and Dr Abdul Raheem Khan, Chair of the London Task Group, attended an exhibition entitled 'Expressions of the Pamir: Culture and Heritage of the Ismaili Muslims of Tajikistan', held by the Ismaili Centre on Thursday May 9th. The exhibition celebrates the rich legacy of art and culture of the societies of the Pamir mountains region of Central Asia.

Business and Economics Committee

Student Loans

Iqbal Asaria, Chair of the Business and Economics Committee has been in correspondence with the National Union of Students (NUS) on the issue of student loans. The NUS is reviewing the issue and the MCB has advised against tying loan charges to market rates.

Events

Conservative's Ethnic and Faith Communities meeting

Gary Streeter MP, the Conservative Vice Chairman of the Ethnic and Faith Communities group, and the Conservative Home Affairs team will be meeting with faith community representatives on Tuesday May 14th to discuss British Muslim identity amongst the young; the Government's white paper on immigration and citizenship tests; the Anti Terrorism Bill and effective ways for political parties to appeal to Muslims. An MCB representative will attend the event.

Britain Beyond the Rhetoric: Delivering Equality and Social Justice

As part of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Commission for Racial Equality, Chairman Gurbux Singh will be delivering a speech on race relations in the UK and the issues of identity and citizenship at the Royal Society of Arts on Thursday May 16th. Secretary General Iqbal Sacranie will attend the event on behalf of the MCB.